

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 04377 301037Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1312

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 4377

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PK, US, PFOR
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S CHARGES OF U.S. INTERFERENCE IN PAKISTAN
POLITICS

REFERENCE: STATE 097652

1. I CALLED ON FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI AT NOON
APRIL 30 TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTEL. I TOLD
SHAHI THAT DEPARTMENT WAS DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED OVER HIS
REACTION TO MY DEMARCHE ON APRIL 29. I SAID THAT THERE
SHOULD BE NO DOUBT IN THE MINDS OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF

THE GOP THAT A CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN OF
VILIFICATION AGAINST THE U.S. (AND IT HAS TAKEN ON
HEIGHTENED VIGOR IN TODAY'S LOCAL PRESS) COULD HAVE A
SERIOUS IMPACT ON U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS, CONTRARY TO
THE EXPRESSED INTEREST OF THE GOP IN MAINTAINING A MUTUALLY
BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. I TOLD
SHAHI THAT GIVEN HIS ASSERTTION THE GOP HAD A "FORMIDABLE
MASS OF EVIDENCE" TO SUPPORT ITS ALLEGATIONS, AND OUR
CATEGORICAL DENIAL OF INTERFERENCE, WE EXPECT THE GOP
TO PRODUCE SUCH EVIDENCE FOR OUR REVIEW. I ADDED THAT
I BELIEVED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCH A REVIEW WAS ENTIRELY
WITHIN THE SPIRIT OF THE DESIRE, WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER
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HAD OFTEN MADE TO AMBASSADOR BYROADE, TO DISCUSS DIFFERENCES
AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS PRIVATELY RATHER THAN PUBLICLY.
I CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT LOOKS FORWARD TO
AN EARLY RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY'S LETTER.

2. AGHA SHAHI RESPONDED IN ONE SENTENCE: "IN VIEW OF
THE SERIOUSNESS OF WHAT YOU HAVE SAID, I WANT TO GIVE

YOU A CONSIDERED REPLY AND WILL BE BACK TO YOU."

3. AT THIS POINT, I SOUGHT TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY OF MY CALL TO DISCUSS INFORMALLY WITH SHAHI MY OWN DEEP CONCERN OVER THE COURSE OF OUR RELATIONS. EMPHAIZING THAT I WAS NOT SPEAKING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, BUT AS ONE WHO HAS BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED IN PROMOTING GOOD U.S.-PAK RELATIONS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. IN THIS CONTEXT, I TOLD SHAHI I WANTED HIM TO KNOW THAT I BELIEVED THE SITUATION WAS SERIOUS AND THAT MANY ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONS AND PROGRAMS COULD BE ENDANGERED IF THE ANTI-U.S. CAMPAIGN CONTINUED ON ITS PRESENT COURSE. I SAID I WANTED TO CONVEY THIS TO HIM, AS A FRIEND WHOM I BELIEVED SHARED OUR DESIRE TO PRESERVE OUR RELATIONSHIPS. I ALSO SAID THAT MY REMARKS WERE IN NO WAY INTENDED AS A THREAT, BUT WERE GIVEN IN A SENSE OF REALISM ABOUT THE WAY IN WHICH THE SCENARIO COULD UNFOLD. SHAHI MADE NO RESPONSE TO THIS PORTION OF MY REMARKS.

4. COMMENT: IT WAS APPARENT BOTH YESTERDAY AND TODAY THAT SHAHI IS UNWILLING TO DISCUSS OUR PROBLEM, EXCEPT IN ACCORDANCE WITH CAREFUL INSTRUCTIONS. YESTERDAY HE SPOKE FROM NOTES, PREPARED IN ANTICIPATION OF MY DEMARCHE. TODAY SHAHI DID NOT KNOW WHAT I WOULD SAY AND WAS THEREFORE UNINSTRUCTED. THE ISSUE IS ENTIRELY IN THE PM'S HANDS, AND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT EITHER SHAHI OR FOREIGN MINISTER AZIZ AHMED WILL HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE ON THE WAY BHUTTO CHOOSES TO PLAY IT.

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